

# Life Threatening Allergies

By:

North County School District  
Nurses

# Definitions

- Allergen: A substance that triggers an allergic reaction
- Allergic Reaction: An immune system response to a substance that the body interprets as being harmful
- Life-Threatening Allergy: An allergic reaction that is severe enough to potentially cause death
- Anaphylaxis: A life-threatening allergic reaction that involves the entire body

# Common Allergens

- Nuts
  - Tree Nuts
  - Peanuts
- Stings
  - Wasps, hornets, yellow jackets
  - Bees
- Latex
  - Mylar balloons, misc. items
  - Band aids, surgical tape

# Common Allergens

- Food
  - Shellfish & other types of seafood
  - Eggs, wheat, fruit vegetables
- Meds
  - Usually when taken for first time
  - Unusual outside of the hospital
- Other
  - Individual allergies

# Facts About Children with a Severe Food Allergy

- 1 in 6 will have a reaction at school
- Majority of fatal allergic reactions occur away from home, after eating foods thought to be safe
- Ingestion of a minute amount of an allergen can trigger a reaction
- Some react to exposure from air or skin contact
- Strict avoidance of known allergens is critical

# Symptoms of an Allergic Reaction

- Lung- difficulty breathing, coughing, wheezing, may look like asthma
- Mouth- tingling, swelling of lips/ tongue/ throat
- Skin- hives itching, swelling face or extremities
- Gut- vomiting, nausea, abdominal cramps, diarrhea
- Throat- swelling, hoarseness, difficulty swallowing
- Heart- pale skin, fainting
- Mental- dizzy, light- headed, unconscious

# What do I need to know???

- Which students have an allergy action plan and where is it kept?
- Medication: what, where, when, and how?
- How do I handle an allergic reaction?

# Response to an Allergic Reaction

Regulation 2875: Any staff member who becomes aware that a student is having an allergic reaction must:

1. Stay with the student
2. Notify the nurse immediately or direct another person to do so. If nurse is unavailable, notify building principal. Get EAP
3. Contact office- they will call 911 and parents
4. Administer Epinephrine if necessary

# A word about Epinephrine

- Don't assume that a student will be willing or able to administer their epi shot if it is needed
- Children with severe allergies are not going to be hurt by giving epinephrine, even if it turns out to be unnecessary
- Children with severe allergies have died because epinephrine was withheld at the first symptoms of a reaction
- It is better to give an epi shot that is not needed than to withhold an epi shot when it is needed

# I don't know how to use an epi pen!

- An Epi pen is easy to use once you have been properly trained. There is an Epi pen in each nurse's office
- Demo
- Training will be provided in each building
- Every staff member **MUST** be trained
- Every staff member **MUST** sign a competency sheet

Don't take for granted that the  
nurse will do it!

Know and understand this  
information!

# Life Threatening Allergies/ Food Allergy Prevention Competency

This statement is to confirm that I have read and understand the provisions outlined in the Life Threatening Allergies/ Food Allergy Prevention Presentation.

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Building Assigned to: \_\_\_\_\_